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SIGNALMAN TURNS BACK PLUS QUE PARFAIT IN \$200,000 KENTUCKY JOCKEY CLUB

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Saturday, Nov. 24, 2018) – **Signalman**, who finished third in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile (Grade I) just 22 days ago, grabbed the lead with three-sixteenths of a mile to run and turned back a late charge from **Plus Que Parfait** to win Saturday's 92nd running of the \$200,000 Kentucky Jockey Club (Grade II) at Churchill Downs by a neck.

Signalman clocked 1 1/16 miles over a "muddy" track in 1:45.29. **Brian Hernandez Jr.** rode the winner for trainer **Kenny McPeck** and owners **Tommie M. Lewis, David A. Bernsen LLC** and **Sherri McPeck's Magdalena Racing**.

Signalman collected \$112,840 and 10 points as part of the 35-race "Road to the Kentucky Derby Presented by Woodford Reserve" series, which offered points on a scale of 10-4-2-1 to the Top 4 finishers as a "Prep Season" race. Overall, he's won two of his five starts. His earnings stand at \$448,990 and has 18 points overall to rank third overall on the Road to the Kentucky Derby leaderboard.

The winner Signalman, who broke from the rail in the full field of 14 2-year-olds as the 7-2 second betting choice, rated in sixth down the backstretch as longshot **Topper T** led the field through a swift first quarter mile in :23.12 and a half-mile in :46.83. As the leaders neared the final turn, Signalman showed a quick burst of speed and moved into third along the inside rail.

Topper T, racing along the rail, passed the six-furlong marker in 1:12.33 but was tiring. Trainer Todd Pletcher's New York invader **King for a Day** briefly poked his head in front at the top of the stretch and Plus Que Parfait and **Limonite** were hitting their best strides after racing near the back of the pack. But it was Signalman, who zipped past Topper T's right hip between horses with three-sixteenths of a mile to run and turned back a late challenge from a hard-charging Plus Que Parfait to land the win.

"This horse always gave me a lot of confidence," said Hernandez, who also won the 2016 Kentucky Jockey Club aboard **McCracken**. "We were able to work out the best trip possible in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile from the 14-hole. Today, I was able to get him up into the race early and he really showed what he could do. You're always fortunate to have the horse under you and today we did. Down the lane he was actually looking over at the TV screen. Even with the little quirks he still shows a lot of promise. He'll be exciting down the road."

Trainer **Brendan Walsh** also is excited about the prospects of runner-up Plus Que Parfait. "He ran a great race," Walsh said. "I'm very excited and pleased with his effort today. We'll have a lot of fun with him down the road. He's just getting going."

Limonite narrowly edged King for a Day for third and they were another 1 3/4 lengths back of the winner. **Roiland, Tracksmith, Current, Topper T, Dunph, Royal Urn**, Breeders' Cup Juvenile runner-up and 3-1 favorite **Knicks Go, Mick's Star, Blue Steel** and **Everfast** completed the order of finish.

Signalman paid \$9.20, \$5.20 and \$3.80. Plus Que Parfait, at odds of 14-1 under **Julien Leparoux**, paid \$14.20 and \$9.80. Limonite, who went to post at 20-1 with **Ricardo Santana Jr.** aboard, returned \$9.20 to show.

Signalman, a son of General Quarters out of the Trippi mare Trip South, was bred in Kentucky by **Monticule**, who bred 2008 Kentucky Derby winner **Big Brown**. He was purchased for just \$32,000 as a yearling.

"He was a big, strong horse when he went through the sales ring and today he still is that type of horse," said McPeck, who also won the 2001 Kentucky Jockey Club with **Repent**. "He's taken us a long way so far and it's been a lot of fun. I love the way Brian rode him today; it made up for the (Golden Rod) when we thought we were a cinch (with runner-up **Restless Rider**). This is what we all work for."

McPeck said Signalman would get some rest at Payson Park in South Florida and be pointed to a major Kentucky Derby prep race such as April's Blue Grass (GI) at Keeneland.

"We'll let him tell us but obviously the big one is in May," McPeck said.

The Kentucky Jockey Club is named in honor of the holding company that operated Churchill Downs at the time of the race's inaugural running in 1920. In recent years, the Kentucky Jockey Club produced Kentucky Derby winners in **WinStar Farm's Super Saver**, who won both races for trainer **Todd Pletcher** in 2009 and '10, and **Mike Pegram's Real Quiet**, the runner-up in the 1997 Kentucky Jockey Club who returned to win the Derby for trainer **Bob Baffert** the following spring.

Each of the 12 races on Saturday at Churchill Downs was exclusively for 2-year-olds that may have aspirations of trail-blazing their way to next spring's Kentucky Derby Presented by Woodford Reserve and Longines Kentucky Oaks. Inaugurated in 2005, Churchill Downs' "Stars of Tomorrow" programs have helped launched the careers of numerous graded stakes winners, including more than 50 future Grade I winners led by Super Saver; Horse of the Year and Breeders' Cup Classic winner **Gun Runner**; 2011 Preakness and 2012 Met Mile and Clark Handicap winner **Shackleford**; 2009 Horse of the Year **Rachel Alexandra**; 2012 Breeders' Cup Classic and 2013 Stephen Foster Handicap hero **Fort Larned**; 2012 Kentucky Oaks winner **Believe You Can**; 2013 champion 3-year-old **Will Take Charge**; and 2016 Belmont Stakes winner **Creator**.

Racing at Churchill Downs continues Sunday at 1 p.m. ET with a 12-race card for closing day of the 21-day Fall Meet. There will be no massive Single 6 Jackpot carryover pool to chase. The sequence went down with only one winning combination for a whopping \$500,256.88.

LIORA UPSETS RESTLESS RIDER IN GRADE II, \$200,000 GOLDEN ROD

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Saturday, Nov. 24, 2018) – Coffeepot Stables' 2-year-old filly **Liora** – the longest shot in the field of eight 2-year-old fillies at odds of 27-1 – led every step of the way and narrowly repelled a late bid by odds-on 3-5 favorite and Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies (Grade I) runner-up **Restless Rider** to win Saturday's 75th running of the \$200,000 Golden Rod (Grade II) at Churchill Downs by a scant nose.

Liora, who ran 1 1/16 miles over a "muddy" track in 1:46.25, collected the \$120,280 first prize and 10 points as part of the 30-race "Road to the Kentucky Oaks" series, which offers points on a scale of 10-4-2-1 to the Top 4 finishers as a "Prep Season" race.

Channing Hill rode the winner for trainer and father-in-law **Wayne Catalano**. Two years ago, the owners (**Bob Cummings** and **Annette Bacola**), trainer and jockey teamed to win the Golden Rod with **Farrell**, and Catalano also won the race in 2014 with **West Coast Belle**.

Liora broke fastest of all from post No. 6, quickly moved to the rail and rattled off comfortable quarter-mile fractions of :24.81, :49.68 and 1:14.70 when New York invader **Break Curfew** was bothered at the start and decided to track the leader. Restless Rider, racing in the clear on the outside, commenced a move into contention on the far turn and drew even with the leader at the top of the stretch. But Liora was stubborn and refused to relinquish the lead as the two battled gamely in a long stretch drive.

"She's an awesome filly," Hill said. "The only real concern from a pace standpoint was **Chad Brown's** filly (Break Curfew). She had showed a little bit of speed prior. Wayne always tells me to let them break and see what happens. I kept giving her little taps late in the stretch and she kept finding more. She galloped out really well, too."

Prior to the Golden Rod, Liora broke her maiden in her third start on the Oct. 28 opening day "Stars of Tomorrow I" card at Churchill Downs with a nine-length romp as the 5-2 second choice.

"On paper it was a really tough race," Catalano said. "This filly showed a lot of talent training for this race. She's been full circle. We ran her at Saratoga and that didn't really work out. Then, we tried her on the grass and she ran okay but when she broke her maiden she showed her talent. We decided to take the Farrell route and now she's on the Kentucky Oaks trail."

High Regard was another 2 1/2 lengths back in third and was followed by **Champagne Anyone**, **Gold Credit**, **Princess Causeway**, **Break Curfew** and **Reflect**.

Liora improved her record to 4-2-0-1—\$176,580 and paid \$56.80, \$12.60 and \$6.80. Restless Rider, ridden by **Brian Hernandez Jr.**, paid \$2.40 and \$2.20. High Regard, under **Corey Lanerie**, returned \$7.40 to show.

“Brian thought that (Break Curfew) would show a little bit more pace up front and pressure (Liora),” said **Greg Geier**, assistant to **Kenny McPeck** who trains Restless Rider. “She went really slow up there and controlled her own destiny. We just couldn’t get to her down the stretch after going that slow.”

Liora, a daughter of Candy Ride (ARG) out of the Giant’s Causeway mare Giant Mover, was bred in Kentucky by **Dell Ridge Farm LLC**.

KENTUCKY JOCKEY CLUB QUOTES

Brian Hernandez Jr., jockey of SIGNALMAN (winner): “This horse always gave me a lot of confidence. We were able to work out the best trip possible in the Breeders’ Cup Juvenile from the 14-hole. Today, I was able to get him up into the race early and he really showed what he could do. You’re always fortunate to have the horse under you and today we did. Down the lane he was actually looking over at the TV screen. Even with the little quirks he still shows a lot of promise. He’ll be exciting down the road.”

Kenny McPeck, trainer of SIGNALMAN (winner): “He was a big, strong horse when he went through the sales ring and today he still is that type of horse. He’s taken us a long way so far and it’s been a lot of fun. I love the way Brian rode him today; it made up for the (Golden Rod) when we thought we were a cinch (with Restless Rider). This is what we all work for. He’ll get a little rest, probably at Payson Park for about a month. Then, we’ll ease him back into things and look at races like the Blue Grass down the road. We’ll let him tell us but obviously the big one is in May.”

Brendan Walsh, trainer of PLUS QUE PARFAIT (runner-up): “He ran a great race. I’m very excited and pleased with his effort today. We’ll have a lot of fun with him down the road. He’s just getting going.”

Julien Leparoux, jockey of PLUS QUE PARFAIT (runner-up): “He ran great. I think he’s just going to keep getting better with each start.”

Ricardo Santana Jr., jockey of LIMONITE (third): “He just needed a little more distance today. I thought he ran very well today and will improve when the distances get a little longer.”

GOLDEN ROD QUOTES

Channing Hill, jockey of LIORA (winner): “She’s an awesome filly. The only real concern from a pace standpoint was Chad Brown’s filly (Break Curfew). She had showed a little bit of speed prior. Wayne always tells me to let them break and see what happens. I kept giving her little taps late in the stretch and she kept finding more. She galloped out really well, too.”

Wayne Catalano, trainer of LIORA (winner): “On paper it was a really tough race. This filly showed a lot of talent training for this race. She’s been full circle. We ran her at Saratoga and that didn’t really work out. Then, we tried her on the grass and she ran okay but when she broke her maiden she showed her talent. We decided to take the Farrell route and now she’s on the Kentucky Oaks trail.”

Greg Geier, assistant trainer of RESTLESS RIDER (runner-up as 3-5 favorite): “Brian thought that (Break Curfew) would show a little bit more pace up front and pressure (Liora). She went really slow up there and controlled her own destiny. We just couldn’t get to her down the stretch after going that slow.”

Corey Lanerie, jockey of HIGH REGARD (third): “I thought I had a big shot turning for home. She ran really well this afternoon.”

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